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OFFICE OF  
NATIONAL ESTIMATES

## MEMORANDUM

### *The Outlook for Hashemite Rule in Jordan*

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5 April 1971

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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

5 April 1971

### MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Outlook for Hashemite Rule in Jordan\*

1. The fedayeen challenge to King Hussein reached the point last September where his writ hardly extended beyond the palace walls. Never having really accepted the Hashemite Monarchy, many Palestinians looked forward to its downfall, and to the most militant nationalists among them this seemed almost in sight. The antagonism of Palestinians toward the Monarchy derives strength from two emotional attitudes -- resentment that the Hashemite regime was imposed upon them by outsiders and fear that it might make a deal with the Israelis at their expense.

2. The fedayeen campaign produced a critical situation for several weeks last fall. But that challenge failed and the

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\* This memorandum was prepared by the Office of National Estimates and coordinated within CIA.

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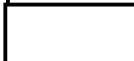
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smashing defeat which the Jordanian Army administered, and its constant pressure on the fedayeen since, has put the Hashemite throne in its solidest position for many years. Hussein has installed a government dominated by East Bank conservatives and backed by the Army establishment who support his policy of maintaining control over the fedayeen. His most important opponents are cowed and fragmented, and the larger number who dislike the regime, but whose disapproval has been more passive, have lapsed into their customary frustrated acquiescence.

3. The King's authority has not only been reasserted and prospects for the continuation of his rule improved but he has, for the first time, a credible successor. In the months since the September showdown his brother, Crown Prince Hasan, has shown more and more promise. Hasan appears mature beyond his 23 years.



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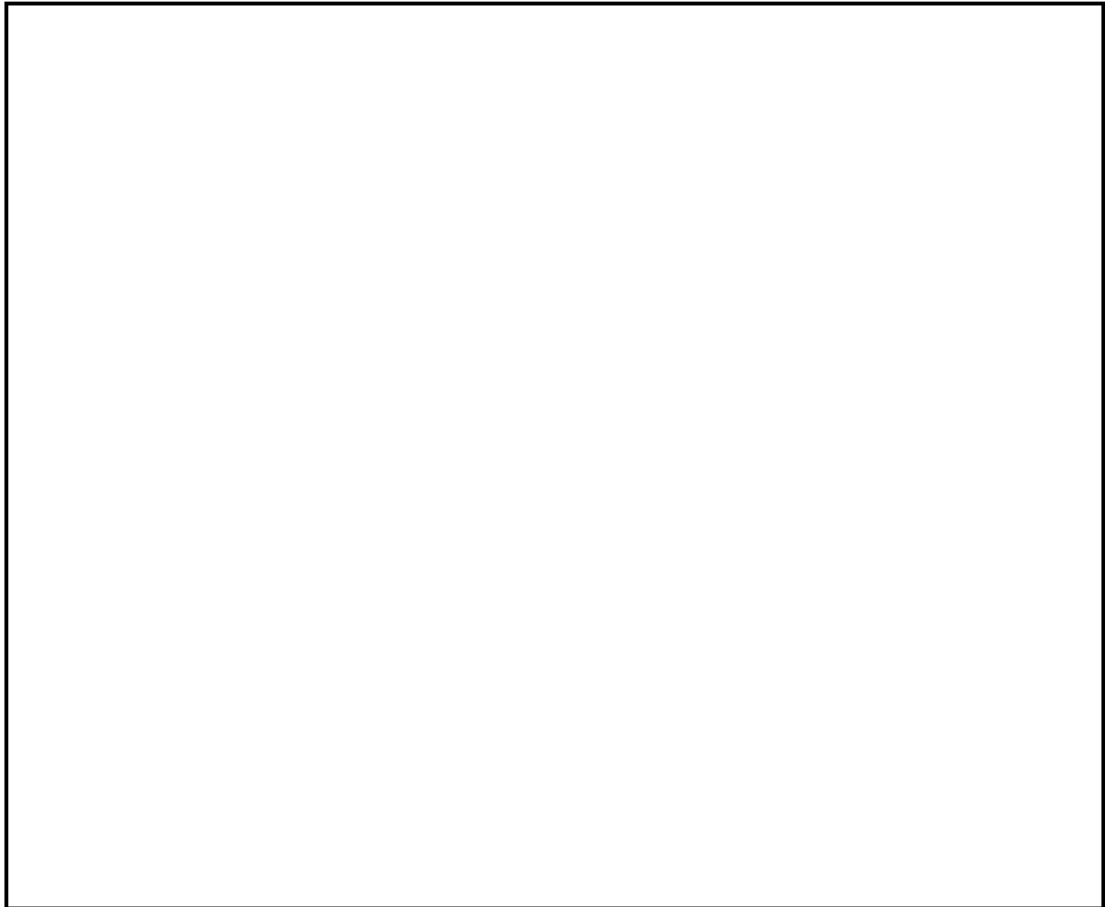
When the King was absent from the country late in 1970, Hasan, as regent, in cooperation with Prime Minister Wasfi Tal continued the planned campaign against the fedayeen, keeping Hussein informed. The Crown Prince grew in experience, and respect

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for him in the Army -- which has cultivated him assiduously --  
and the East Bank establishment was enhanced.

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5. While many Palestinians expressed bitter resentment during the Army's bloody suppression of the fedayeen last September, in the past several months there has been a reconsideration. A sizable number of the Palestinian middle class living on the East Bank are a part of the Jordanian

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"establishment" and never did support the fedayeen; others have recently come to see their interests threatened by the fedayeen's rampaging. Many Palestinians on both sides of the Jordan River, apparently decided after the September fighting that their desire for law and order outweighed their sense of Palestinian nationalism -- at least as it was exemplified by the atrocity-prone fedayeen. Also, inhabitants of the refugee camps are reported to have become fed up with the firefights between Jordan security forces and fedayeen in the camps. Many Palestinian intellectuals had never really agreed with those extremist fedayeen elements who favored a takeover of the Jordanian regime. The goal was not change in Jordan but a free hand against Israel -- better the orderly tyranny of the alien Hashemites than the feckless rule of an irresponsible fedayeen.\*

6. In addition, the realization was spreading among the Palestinians that the fedayeen had not achieved any success in regaining the lost territories, nor had they much prospect of doing so. Even in the refugee camps support for the fedayeen is reported to have dwindled. Many Palestinians have now come to believe that the Jordanian regime has better prospects of

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\* *A paraphrase of the old Arabic proverb, "Better the tyranny of the Turks than the justice of the Arabs."*

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ending the Israeli occupation of the West Bank than have all the fedayeen exertions. Looking into the future, many Palestinians fear that a separate West Bank Palestinian state would be Israeli-dominated, as well as economically unviable. Thus they see their future as lying in some arrangement with Amman, preferably an arrangement providing considerable autonomy for the West Bank Palestinians. In an important sense, both the Palestinians and the Amman government need each other and each party realizes the fact. Relations between the two never will be cordial, nor fully trusting, but the necessity for a working relationship will tend to dampen their mutual hostilities.

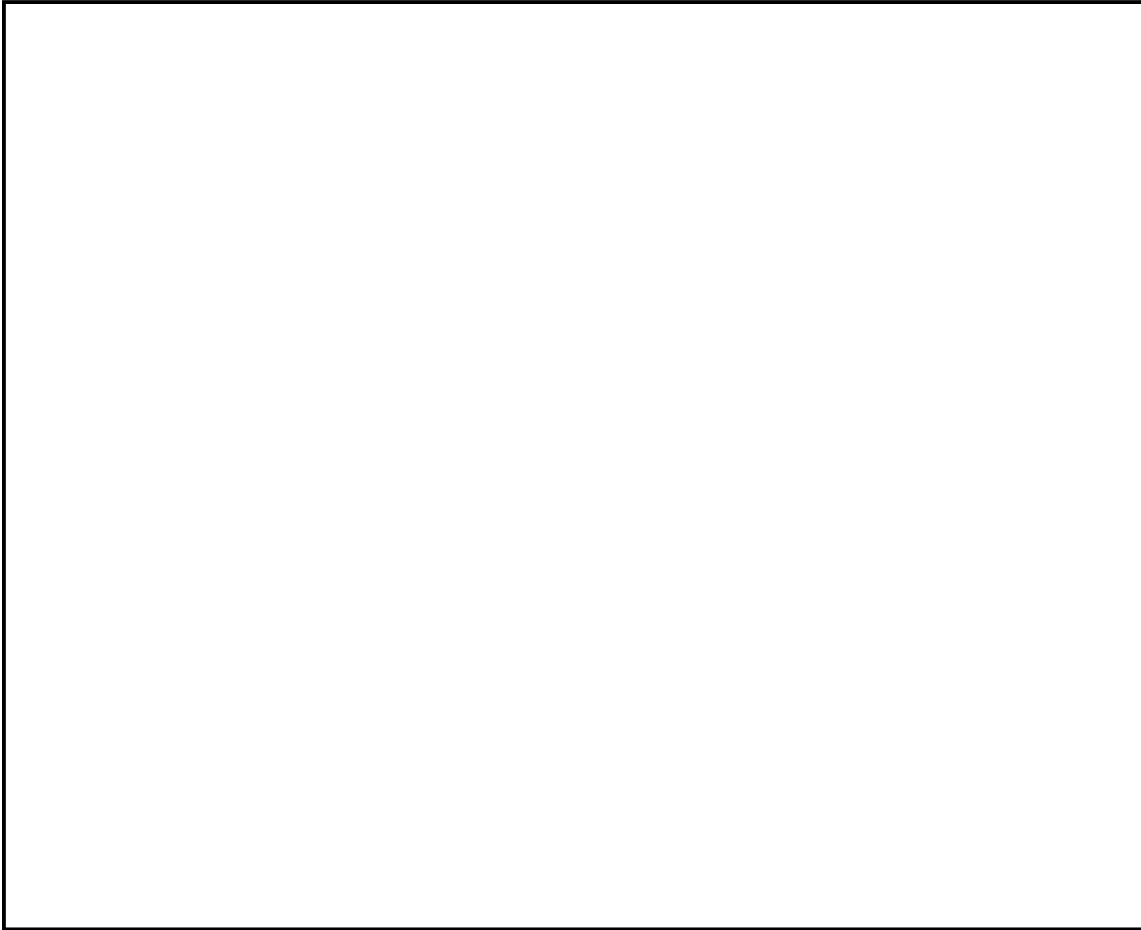
7. Such a community of interests may make it easier over time for Hussein to reach a settlement with the Israelis, as long as he does not appear to "sell out" the West Bankers and gains some arrangement in the Arab part of Jerusalem so that a semblance of Arab sovereignty is maintained. If the prospects for a reassertion of Arab sovereignty over the West Bank seem good, the great majority of Palestinians are likely to side with Hussein against the fedayeen extremists -- or at least remain neutral. Even a significant proportion of the fedayeen probably would settle for a peaceful return to their West Bank homeland.

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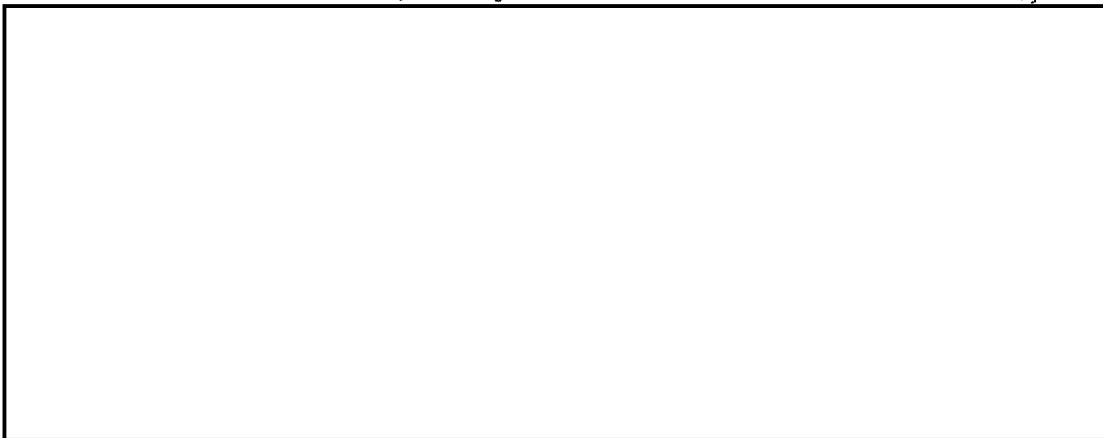


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13. The prospects for the Hashemite regime have improved considerably in the past several months. Its future no longer appears to rest so completely on the life or death of Hussein;



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*Formerly  
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